

Sir,

Paris, April 21st 1780.

The first time I spoke, according to my Instructions, to D.^r Franklin on the pretext of my mission, he observed that so many people had come to Europe from every State on that kind of business, that they had ruined our credit, & made the money-men shy of us. I said that Virginia should not partake of the blame on my account, as I would not let them know my business, unless I was pretty well sure of success. Having since taken the opportunity of mentioning the subject several times to him, he never failed giving some marks of disapprobation & displeasure. About 3 weeks past (that is to say about a month since I had first mentioned the matter to him) his reflections induced me to observe, that while Congress called on the several States to supply their men in the Continental Army with things, which must be got from Europe, it became a necessity for them to seek for credit & money; that the persons sent by the States on that errand may perhaps have not proceeded with all the discretion required in such cases; but as to the dishonour & discredit, which you think, says I, that they have brought upon us by spreading such an idea of American poverty, I must beg leave to differ from you, Sir, since all Europe knows, that we want a great many things from hence: that we have no species: & that we cannot, during the war, remit enough of our produce to pay the debts. The only 2 points to gain are, I continued, the persuading them of the solidity & resources of the State, & that we are firmly determined to keep our Independence; & then mentioned the reasons I have to expect that I shall be believed particularly in Florence & Genoa. We have tried in Genoa, he said, without effect.

His Excellency Th.^s Jefferson Gov.^r of Virginia

As I had informed him of my views there from the beginning, his deferring so long to acquaint me with that unlucky trial made a sudden & disagreeable impression on my spirits for a double reason. But that was nothing in comparison to what I have felt to day. He has at last signified to me that 6. B cent was offered. But, Sir, says I at the very first conversation on the subject I informed you that I was empowered to give only 5.; had I known this at that time I could have given
x notice of it by Marquis la Fayette, & the Assembly would have been informed of it in the Spring Session. "I didn't think of it," said he with a true philosophical indifference, "it never came into my head." I have lost no time, Sir, to come & write you the intelligence, with which I have been most disagreeably surprised this day, knowing that there is at Nantes a vessel ready to sail; & I heartily wish that you may receive one of the 4 copies before the Assembly rises. you will, I hope, excuse my blundering more than usual, as I am really disconcerted. In coming from the Doctor, who lives 2. miles out of the town, I was at thinking what to do. I have resolved to proceed on my journey as soon as I can raise money, & to go & lay a foundation for executing the orders I may receive hereafter. It is requisite to observe, that however great my doubts may be in infusing notions of our solidity & resources, & desire of entering into our views, I cannot with any degree of prudence mention the terms expressed in my instructions, as D.^r Franklin's offer is certainly known every where, the Experiment have been tried by the medium of public Bankers. The offering less than it has already been offered, would be ridiculous, & perhaps injurious to the credit of Congress. If the State should not like the terms, I might act for Congress, & probably succeed, although others have failed. I intend to mention it to the Doctor, & if I should meet with more philosophy than zeal, I have a mind to explain the whole matter to M.^r John Adams

(if he affords me an opening to do it) & avail myself of his advice & assistance. The established character of his great abilities & patriotism all over the Continent would, I hope, sufficiently warrant my step, besides what I know of him from the late Gouernor, & still more from yourself. I hope soon to entertain you with some favourable account of European affairs, & I have the honour to be most respectfully,

Sir,

Your Excellency's most Obedient
& most Humble Servant
Philip Mazzei

Letter

Do.

RWID14(2) MS.A.1.1.7.21A